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**DPRK-PRC-USSR**

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*Chinese party leader Hu Yaobang's "unofficial" visit to North Korea appears to have been part of an effort to shore up Beijing's relations with Pyongyang, perhaps because of Chinese concern over the dramatic improvement in Pyongyang's relations with Moscow during the past year. Pyongyang has not reciprocated Beijing's gestures, however, signaling instead that its ties with Moscow continue to develop at Chinese expense.*

**Chinese Party Chief Hu Yaobang Seeks To Mend Korean Fences**

Hu Yaobang visited the North Korean border city of Sinuiju from 4 to 6 May. The visit is his third to North Korea: he accompanied Deng Xiaoping on a belatedly publicized visit in 1982 and made an official visit in May last year. Kim Il-song hosted a banquet for the Chinese delegation on the first day of the visit, and the two sides held talks on the 5th and 6th. As with Kim's unofficial visit to Beijing last November, both sides reported Hu's visit only after it ended and provided little of the detail or color that typically marks media treatment of "official" high-level exchanges.

In line with past practice for meetings between Kim Il-song and his Chinese counterparts, both sides reported that there was a "complete identity" of views on "all questions" at the talks. However, there is evidence that the two sides were unable to find common ground on all international issues. In describing Hu's talks with Kim Il-song, both PRC and DPRK media omitted the usual reference to "international" issues, noting instead that the two sides had discussed "a series of important matters of mutual concern." This atypical formulation follows the public display of Soviet-North Korean unity during DPRK Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam's visit to the Soviet Union last month, a development that may have made it difficult for Pyongyang and Beijing to cast Chinese and North Korean foreign policies in the usual terms of overall agreement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kim Yong-nam's visit to Moscow is discussed in the *Trends* of 1 May 1985, pages 5-8.

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**Chinese Warmth** PRC media reporting on Hu's visit conveyed more warmth than emerged from Kim Il-song's trip to Beijing last November or from Hu's "official" trip to Pyongyang last year. According to Beijing radio's report on 7 May, Hu stated at the banquet on the 4th that relations between the two countries are as close as "lips and teeth," a formulation conspicuously absent from authoritative Chinese characterizations of Sino-Korean relations over the past year. Xinhua accounts of the banquet did not include these remarks, but did note that both Hu and Kim spoke of the "militant friendship" between the two sides. The Xinhua Chinese version, for domestic consumers, went on to describe their relations as "cemented with blood."

These more effusive characterizations of Sino-Korean relations, once standard Chinese fare, began to reappear with some regularity in PRC media in late April. They have, however, been confined to broadcasts for domestic Chinese audiences and have not been included in English-language accounts for overseas consumers. A 30 April Xinhua domestic account of a PLA banquet for a visiting Korean army art troupe, for example, reported the Chinese speaker referring to the two sides as "brothers and comrades-in-arms." The same troupe was addressed by CPC Politburo member Yang Shangkun on 3 May. According to a Xinhua Chinese account, Yang described the two sides as having an "intimate militant friendship cemented with blood." The Xinhua account merely noted that Yang "spoke highly" of Sino-Korean friendship.

Pyongyang failed to acknowledge any of the warmer Chinese language used to mark Hu's visit. DPRK reportage on the visit itself was confined to a 7 May account which, like the reporting on Kim Il-song's visit to Beijing last year, provided no details of the banquet speeches. Hu's visit was mentioned in a 10 May talk on Sino-North Korean relations on Pyongyang radio, which was virtually identical to one aired last year, a few days after Kim's visit to China.

### **Pyongyang Uses WW II Date To Underscore Ties to Moscow**

Three days after Hu's departure, Pyongyang used the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe to focus public attention on Soviet-Korean friendship. The leadership turnout for the anniversary meetings was larger and at a markedly higher level than it was for the 30th anniversary in 1975.

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Reiterating themes that Pyongyang has stressed over the past year, comment on the anniversary strongly backed USSR foreign policy against U.S. "imperialism," lavishly praised Soviet support for North Korea, and hailed the Red Army as Korea's "liberator" from Japan.

Pyongyang's closer ties to Moscow were highlighted by both sides through an exchange of air force squadrons to mark the anniversary. Although neither side depicted the exchange as a demonstration of their military collaboration, Pyongyang radio reported a speech by the Soviet ambassador at an 8 May rally in which he extensively praised the Warsaw Pact and argued that the "strength" of Soviet policy rests on its "close unity" with socialist countries. This discussion of military cooperation among the socialist countries reinforces the view that their "military strength" is needed to restrain "imperialism"—a recurrent theme in North Korean media since last summer.

**Kim Chong-il** The World War II anniversary celebrations again underscored the link between Kim Chong-il—Kim Il-song's son and heir apparent—and improving USSR-DPRK relations. North Korean anniversary reporting also implicitly connected the younger Kim with the military aspects of Soviet-North Korean relations. Kim led the Korean leadership turnout to the Soviet ambassador's banquet on 9 May. According to DPRK media, he received a gift from the Soviet Defense Ministry, delivered by the head of the visiting Soviet air force squadron. No gifts were reported for any other DPRK leaders, including Kim Il-song. At the 9 May rally for the Soviet pilots, according to a Pyongyang radio report the same day, the Korean speaker claimed that the mutual visits by the squadrons were occurring "amid the great interest and consideration" of Kim Chong-il, with whom he identified a "period of new efflorescence" in Soviet-Korean relations.

While highlighting Kim Chong-il's connection with the USSR, Pyongyang has been playing down his role in relations with China. This shift reverses the pattern of attention given to his unofficial visit to the PRC in June 1983, which Pyongyang had previously portrayed as a major event cementing the relationship. For example, the 10 May Pyongyang radio talk on Sino-Korean relations that mentioned Hu Yaobang's journey to Sinuiju—otherwise identical to a parallel talk after Kim Il-song's China visit last year—reduced the significance of the younger Kim's role. Last year the radio described the significance of his 1983 visit in "inheriting and developing the traditional friendship, revolutionary unity, and comradely fraternity between the parties and peoples . . . generation after generation." By contrast, the recent commentary noted only that Kim's visit provided "a firm foundation for inheriting and developing the glorious tradition of Korea-China friendship over generations."

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Similarly, DPRK media reporting of Kim's recent dealings with the Chinese has appeared distinctly less cordial than his contacts with the Soviet Union. In late April, Kim hosted a dinner for a Chinese delegation led by head of the CPC International Department Qian Liren. Chinese media reported that Kim had a "friendly talk" with the delegation and that Qian presented a gift to his host, but DPRK media versions of the banquet made no reference either to talks between the two sides or to a gift. By contrast, a Soviet delegation led by O. Rakhmanin, first vice director of the CPSU International Department, was received by Kim Chong-il together with Kim Il-song, and Pyongyang reported the guests presenting gifts to both father and son. The younger Kim also hosted a banquet for the Soviet delegation. Media accounts of that banquet precisely paralleled those reporting the banquet for the Chinese delegation, but the report on the dinner for Rakhmanin was published in a more prominent position in *Nodong Sinmun* than that for Qian. (U/FOUO)